

## **EXHIBIT A**

March 13, 2025

**The Honorable Jeffrey S. White**

Oakland Courthouse  
Courtroom 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
1301 Clay Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Judge White,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Casey Goonan who is scheduled to appear before you for a hearing. I have known Dr. Goonan for 8 years in the capacity of a close friend, collaborator, and co-teacher. I first met him in my role as an assistant professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in 2018 and have since maintained close ties with him as I've moved to Charlottesville, Virginia to work at the University of Virginia. We've collaborated on several community-based projects with my arts organization, Axis Lab; as co-teachers with the Prison Neighborhood Arts Education Project (PNAP); and as a guest lecturer in my courses at Northwestern University and the University of Virginia.

Dr. Goonan is an outstanding human being, he is deeply compassionate, honest, loving, and generous. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, with the rise of hate crimes against Asians and African Americans and inflation, Dr. Goonan and I started a mutual aid and food distribution project for poor and unhoused minorities including immigrants and refugees facing the brunt of job losses, unaffordable healthcare, and inadequate housing. Dr. Goonan worked with me selflessly for two years, setting up a free food distribution center including groceries, prepared foods, COVID-care kits (including tests, masks, etc.). He thoughtfully engaged with local communities, asking them how they're doing and offering extra support including additional tents and hand warmers for those who were homeless. Dr. Goonan not only ensured he offered people enough food and supplies for shelter, but also cared about how they were doing and who they are as human beings- he always asked people about their day, past lives, and future hopes. People at the mutual aid would point him out to me and say, "he's a good one."

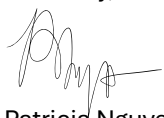
Additionally, Dr. Goonan has been a guest lecturer in four of my classes at Northwestern University and the University of Virginia (Abolition & Transformative Justice; Migration, Detention, and Sanctuary; and Race, Mental Health, and Healing Justice). He is a student favorite- he was always attentive to their questions and is a very articulate and knowledgeable speaker on a history of the United States. Students always felt inspired after his lectures and compelled to help society become a better place, he encouraged people to volunteer and support communities who have been historically marginalized.

Since 2020, I began to notice a drastic shift in Dr. Goonan's mental health. I remember he mentioned he had multiple diagnoses including Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in 2019. He told me about his struggles with suicidal thoughts, deep depression, addictions, and ruminating thoughts. The pandemic and social isolation exacerbated his conditions. We lived together for about one year and I noticed a dramatic shift including increased paranoia and suicidal thoughts. I've followed up with him since and noticed that his mental health was strained, impacting his physical well-being, including his worsening heart condition and complications with diabetes. Despite these struggles, he always gave to others and presented his best self to his communities, friends, and family.

I am confident Dr. Goonan will continue to be a person of excellent character. They are highly regarded nationally in communities advocating for transformative justice and among their friends and colleagues. I hope that this letter offers some insight into Dr. Goonan's character and helps to demonstrate that they are an upstanding individual.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my letter in support of Dr. Goonan. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [ptn02006@gmail.com](mailto:ptn02006@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Patricia Nguyen, PhD.  
Assistant Professor, American Studies  
University of Virginia

Executive Director  
Axis Lab | [www.axislab.org](http://www.axislab.org)

Memorial Designer  
Chicago Torture Justice Memorial |  
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# Carnegie Mellon University

IAN JAMES ALEXANDER  
Visiting Assistant Professor of STS  
CMU Department of History  
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February 24, 2025

To The Honorable Jeffrey S. White:

I am writing to humbly offer my perspective on the character of my dear friend and colleague Casey Goonan. Casey and I met as graduate students in the summer of 2018 through mutual friends and colleagues. I am currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University, and I was recently a Visiting Assistant Professor of American Studies at Wellesley College. I currently live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I hope that I can make a small contribution to your overall sense of Casey's character as a person, a community member, and a friend.

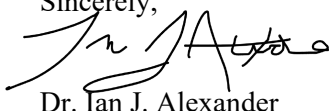
Casey is without a doubt one of the most generous, selfless, and loving people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting in my life. Over the six years of our close friendship, I have never seen a single moment of lapse or inconsistency on that part of Casey's character. During the years 2020 and 2021, Casey and I were on the phone multiple times per week for long discussions of our research, our community work, and our personal experiences during those scary and chaotic first two years of the COVID-19 outbreak. During that time, Casey was doing everything possible to support his neighbors in Chicago, to the point of risking his own health and wellbeing. Writing a dissertation, doing daily community support work by gathering and distributing food, masks, and other necessities, and enduring the generally exhausting and uncertain experience of those years, Casey always made time to speak with me, to give me supportive advice, and to share ideas. Even though Casey lived in Chicago and I was living in Ithaca, NY at the time, Casey was a huge part of how I was able to navigate that period. Casey always assured me that my research was important, and gave me some of the support that kept me working. More importantly, Casey helped keep me optimistic, intellectually curious, and personally grounded.

The first time Casey and I were able to see each other in person after the outbreak was at the American Studies Association annual conference in New Orleans in 2022. Despite dealing with some health issues, Casey was as generous and warm as ever. I was heartened by the enthusiastic greetings he got from our friends and colleagues, and the joy he clearly felt to be in the company of many old friends, colleagues, teachers, and mentors. It's remarkable how many people feel and are close to Casey, and how many genuinely deep friendships Casey is able to maintain and cultivate. Casey seemed so deeply relieved and grateful for that weekend, and we were able to spend several days talking and catching up.

Over the past few years, I have certainly had concerns about my friend's health. Every time I have worried for Casey, it has been directly related to this selfless generosity, and that willingness to put his own wellbeing aside to help friends and community in need. At times, I believe this tendency has led Casey to total exhaustion, and away from the basic personal, material, and mental stability that we all need. But I also know Casey to be one of the smartest people I have ever met, and—these are not the same thing—one of the most adept, open-minded learners I have ever met. I firmly believe without hesitation that Casey will come through this experience stronger, more grounded, and eager to re-focus on the necessary and positive community work that has long been their main priority in life. I believe that Casey can do this while taking care of himself. When that happens, Casey's communities will benefit by his presence, and he by theirs.

Thank you for considering my perspective, and for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian J. Alexander', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Ian J. Alexander

**Subject:** Character letter for Dr. Casey Goonan, #UMF227  
**14 March, 2025**

The Honorable Jeffrey S. White,  
California Northern District Court - Oakland, CA

To the Honorable Jeffrey White:

My name is Ava Tomasula y Garcia. I am currently a graduate student in the Anthropology Department of Columbia University in New York City. I returned this year to Chicago from NYC in order to conduct research towards my doctoral degree: before beginning my PhD program, I lived and worked in Chicago as well.

It was in Chicago that I first met Casey Goonan. I was living in the Uptown neighborhood through the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like so many people in those days of uncertainty and illness, I joined a neighborhood mutual aid group and began distributing food and other essential supplies to neighbors in need. While walking home after one such grocery drop-off in October 2020, I came upon a scene that immediately made me stop: I saw someone standing in the cold behind a folding table with a big FREE sign taped to it. He was handing out deodorant, soap, bottles of water, granola bars, hand warmers, and other supplies to whoever needed them.

Immediately upon seeing Casey standing behind the table, I could tell that this was a person who really cared. Whenever anyone stopped and inevitably asked "Is this stuff really free?" Casey would reply, "Yes: just take what you need!" He never made anyone feel less for coming to the table. He met everyone with the same equality and radiant spirit: Houseless folks with empty stomachs, moms trying to make ends meet in a pandemic, teenagers out walking their block. Everyone mattered. I asked if I could help, and Casey welcomed me with a big smile. I soon found myself filling bags with food and socks. We shared phone numbers and I became part of the growing group of people that coalesced around Casey's table. Together, we began to call the project a Warming Center: We organized who was in charge of cooking breakfasts to bring and share and raised money to buy sleeping bags for people who were out on the street in the cold.

I have truly never experienced a space quite like the world that grew around the Warming Center, and I know this is in large part due to Casey's commitment to fostering true community. At the table, folks volunteering to bring and distribute food and folks who had nothing *actually* came together to make decisions about how the project should progress and how the "distro" should be run. People were *actually* working together across huge differences to build a pocket of justice and solidarity in hard times. It was a joy to be part of the project and to get to know Casey more. Seeing how he was able to bring everyone into a shared circle of support, not a vertical network of charity, inspired me deeply.

Casey is someone who truly believes in the collective: We are only strong when we move *together* to make our world a better place. Through his constant organizing to help other people--and his commitment to making that help truly mutual and grounded in equality--he taught me about the dangers of too much individualism. And so it feels odd to focus on him individually. Yet I have never met any other individual with such a steadfast dedication to the people around him and I feel proud to point it out. He took in homeless neighbors to his own apartment when they needed somewhere to stay. He gathered used clothes to give away for free. Casey taught me so much about how to move through this world and our obligations to one another as human beings. I will carry these lessons with me always.

It was therefore even more distressing to see Casey becoming stressed and more distant the following year. By the spring of 2021, Casey said he had to pull back from the warming project. I remember him saying he was so happy that so many folks could keep the project going, but that it was time for him to step back so he could deal with some personal concerns. I myself moved away to begin graduate school soon after. It was also in 2021 that I stopped receiving text message replies from Casey, whereas we had previously had sustained conversations. I thought something must be wrong for such a bright soul to have closed down from the world so much. Yet I have been lucky enough to know Casey on a deeper level, and know that his nature cannot be so easily broken. On his return to his community of friends, he will be just as giving, just as steadfast.

**Subject:** Character letter for Dr. Casey Goonan, #UMF227

**14 March, 2025**

I write to you now to give my affirmation of Casey's character. He is a blessing on this earth, a true teacher, and a true believer in humanity. He not only changed my life, but I know he has profoundly and materially touched the lives of everyone who comes into his orbit. I hope to welcome him home soon. He is deeply missed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ava Tomasula y Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ava" being the most prominent.

Ava Tomasula y Garcia

1234 W Argyle St, Apt 3F  
Chicago IL 60640  
atomasulaygarcia@gmail.com

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
California Northern District Court  
Oakland, California

My name is Dr. David Chávez and I am professor of History at Compton Community College. I have known Casey Goonan for more than 12 years. We met when I was a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside and Casey was an undergraduate student. We worked together to support local reentry initiatives in Riverside County. He often came over to my home to visit me, my wife, and young daughter. We continued to stay in close contact after he graduated from UCR and went to Northwestern. We visited each other when we could and continued to communicate on the phone and by email.

Casey is a kind and caring person who always volunteered and offered any support he could when asked. When I needed childcare for my then 2yr old daughter during a conference at UCR, he was the first to offer and watch her. When I went to the American Historical Association conference in Chicago in 2019 and needed housing, he let me stay with him and then drove me to the airport. These small but impactful acts of kindness are emblematic of who Casey is.

Starting in 2019 Casey shared with me some of his mental and physical health issues he was going through. He had gone through a serious health scare and was diagnosed with diabetes and high anxiety. I did notice a slight change in his behavior at that time. He did not have the same positive outlook and had more worry for what the future would hold for him, his loved ones, and especially the most marginalized in our society. The impact of his physical and mental health, coupled with the isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic was hard for all of us, including Casey.

I know Casey is currently in custody and is going before the court for sentencing. Despite the harm he caused, he is an amazing person. I have no doubt that he will continue to act with empathy and show care to all those around him. Casey is a dear friend to me, and I know he will be positive member of his community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Chávez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. David Chávez PhD



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w: www.studyandstruggle.com

Oakland Courthouse  
Courtroom 5 – Second Floor  
1301 Clay Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Honorable Jeffrey S. White,

I am an educator, organizer, and author. I was a professor of United States History at the University of Mississippi (2017-2020) and Yale University (2020-2022), where my research, teaching, and writing, focused on the history of Black freedom struggles in the United States. I currently live in Portland, Oregon, where I am an organizer with Study and Struggle, which supports incarcerated people in Mississippi with continuing education.

Dr. Casey Goonan and I first met in 2020 through our scholarly collaboration on a roundtable discussion for the online forum *Black Perspectives*. I was already familiar with the depth and brilliance of Dr. Goonan's scholarship. But I also got to know them as a passionate and selfless advocate through this process. Dr. Goonan and I worked together over the next several years on a variety of different projects. Everyone I encountered, especially those incarcerated, considered Casey a trusted and committed friend who always put their interests first.

During that time, Casey and I began to have conversations about their health, as they were recently diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes—a chronic disease I have had for most of my life. I understand the mental and physical toll it takes, and I was worried about this transition for Casey. Diabetes is a cause of constant stress and physical distress, especially given the state of healthcare in this country. At one point in 2022, I sent extra diabetes supplies to Casey because they lacked sufficient healthcare coverage. Around this time, I was also advocating for a family who had lost a loved one with Type 1 diabetes in prison due to medical neglect. I have been concerned since Casey's arrest about their medical care and the ability of a jail or prison to adequately support anyone with such a complicated medical condition. Put simply, a carceral setting poses a significant risk of death to anyone with Type 1 diabetes due to the high needs and volatility of the disease.

Casey Goonan is a person of conscience and good character who has always, and will always, put others before themselves. I can say with confidence there are few people more generous or honest than they are. I am sure I am just one voice among many who will attest to this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garrett Felber', is written in a cursive style.

Garrett Felber

**TR ROSE, J.D.**

CHICAGO, IL 60626 — 847-366-6875 — trose0226@gmail.com — he/him

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The Honorable Jeffrey S. White

Re: Character reference for Casey Goonan

Dear Judge White,

I am an attorney and community advocate based in Chicago, Illinois, who has worked for over ten years in the fields of civil and criminal legal reform. Throughout this time, I have worked with a diversity of marginalized communities, including incarcerated individuals and communities most directly impacted by our criminal legal system. Most recently, I served as the Community Outreach Lead at the MacArthur Justice Center, a civil and criminal law firm dedicated to advocating for people harmed by America's criminal legal system.

I first met Casey when I attended a panel they organized at Northwestern University detailing and discussing the historical development of the American prison system and the fascistic characteristics of the harm it has wrought on the most marginalized communities of our society. Soon after this event, we connected as friends and professional peers, and would go on to collaborate on a number of initiatives advocating for the rights of people in prison. I am writing to express my deep belief that Casey is a person of the highest character. In fact, Casey, as is reflected in their dedicated life of service and community betterment, is one of few individuals in my life that gives my hope that there is a future for our communities worth fighting for.

In 2020, I had a chance to witness Casey's dedication to service and commitment to those less fortunate when they taught a college course through our college-behind-bars program at Stateville Maximum Security Prison in Illinois. At that time, I was the Managing Director, tasked with overseeing the program overall. Over the course of the class, many students shared with me how Casey's class was a critical source of new information and how the class discussions helped provide a space of co-learning and reciprocal intellectual exploration that is, for obvious reasons, rare to find within the confines of the prison walls. For me, this was just one example that speaks to Casey's refined skills as an educator as well as his values as a compassionate human dedicated to providing resources to those with very little.

Beyond our professional relationship, I am proud to say Casey is a close and dear friend of mine. Throughout their time living in Chicago, we would regularly hangout for coffee, walks, and art projects. From the moment we would meet up, our conversations would quickly dive into deep and deliberative discussions, often debates, on contemporary political issues. It is no exaggeration to say that Casey is one of my most critical political and spiritual interlocutors whose beliefs, awareness and compassion for the world has shaped the core of my being for the better. Lastly, I think it's important to uplift the broader political context of Casey's actions which I believe also shed an important light on who Casey is. We are living in a time when our very own political leaders have funded and supported foreign policy actions that have been deemed illegal war crimes by some of the highest courts of the international legal system. Simultaneously, our Constitutional rights and individual liberties are being undone by a political establishment hellbent on furthering the agendas of the wealthy, powerful few. In this context, I believe that the world Casey has always been fighting for, which is demonstrated throughout their life as a dedicated educator and fierce advocate for social change, is one we should all be striving toward.

Respectfully,

Timothy 'TR' Rose  
trose0226@gmail.com





RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0127

February 18, 2025

Dear Judge and Honorable Officers of the Court:

I write in support of possibly the most conscientious, community-engaged, social justice focused student i have taught in my 25-year career as a professor in the University of California. I have known **Dr. Casey Goonan** for more than a dozen years and am proud to attest to the ways our relationship has evolved from teacher-student to close colleagues and friends. I urge the court to address the pending case with a full appreciation of Dr. Goonan's long history of selfless commitment to the welfare of vulnerable people and communities in every place they have lived, from Riverside, CA to Chicago, IL.

I am a Distinguished Professor at UC Riverside, where i also serve as Co-Director of the Center for Ideas and Society. I was an inaugural recipient of the Freedom Scholar award in 2020 and served as the 2020-2021 President of the American Studies Association. Between 2016-2020, i served two terms as the faculty elected Chair of the UC Riverside Academic Senate. Prior to joining my current departments, i was a faculty member in the Department of Ethnic Studies from 2001-2017, serving two-plus terms as Chair (2009-2016).

I have written hundreds of recommendations for students over the years, as well as focused correspondence like this one that intend to support people facing life-altering court proceedings. Dr. Goonan's position in this instance is especially deserving of my personal and professional attention due to their long history of direct participation in aid efforts, grassroots fundraising, emergency housing provision, and other forms of assistance to friends, loved ones, and community members experiencing acute crisis due to housing displacement, sexual and interpersonal abuse, food insecurity, lack of health care access, sudden joblessness, and life-threatening mental health crisis. Casey consistently puts the well-being of others ahead of their own physical and emotional health, in part because they are so attuned to the surrounding cultures of narcissism and self-absorption that permeate the high-caliber academic institutions they have attended over the years. Thus, i am respectfully pleading with the court to account for Dr. Goonan's long history of selfless community service and generally unrecognized altruism as you determine their term of incarceration.

During their years as a UC Riverside student, i allowed Casey to enroll in one of my Ph.D. research seminars. Despite their undergraduate status, Casey quickly earned a reputation *among their Ph.D. candidate classmates* as the most rigorous, energetic, and incisive thinker among us. After entering arguably the top Ph.D. program of its kind at Northwestern University, i closely observed how Casey gleefully absorbed and engaged difficult scholarly texts, reflected on deep theoretical problems, and thoughtfully posed historical and methodological questions that led to their conceptualization of an extraordinary Ph.D. dissertation project. I was entirely unsurprised by Casey's demonstrations of scholarly excellence. What gratified and inspired me much more was the fact that Casey took great measures to build collective projects with local, Chicago-based community caregiving organizations that funneled the skillsets and resources of students at Northwestern toward forms of mutual, reciprocal wealth/resource sharing that momentarily melted the classical division between "ivory tower" and "community." This is all to say that Casey has a record of humbly leading efforts at community building that actually bridge communities rather than reproduce the borders that separate and alienate them. I look forward to remaining in close contact with Casey during the term of their incarceration and playing an active role in facilitating their reentry when the court determines they are ready to come home.

Dr. Casey Goonan is a precious colleague, loved family member, and gem of a human being. They are one of the most intellectually curious, materially generous, and spiritually supportive students/colleagues i have encountered in my career as a professor. Their degree of care and commitment to the well-being of vulnerable community members is unmatched. I trust that this short letter will be taken into consideration as part of the current matter before the court.

Respectfully yours,



Dylan Rodríguez  
Distinguished Professor  
Dept. of Black Study and Dept. of Media and Cultural Studies  
Co-Director, Center for Ideas and Society  
[2020 Freedom Scholar](#)  
Past President, American Studies Association (2020-2021)  
Former Chair, UC Riverside Academic Senate (2016-2018)  
University of California, Riverside  
Riverside, CA, 92521  
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February 14, 2025

Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
Oakland Courthouse, Courtroom 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
1301 Clay St, Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Hon. Jeffrey White,

My name is Jasmine Ehrhardt and I am a PhD Candidate in American Culture at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I first befriended Casey in 2019, when we met at a conference called *Bend the Bars* in Lansing, Michigan. Since then, we have collaborated on letter-writing projects with currently incarcerated people, and presented research together at the 2022 American Studies Association annual meeting. I write this letter to vouch for Casey's good character and strong dedication to justice and humanity.

I have been deeply impressed and moved by Casey's commitment to caring for and uplifting all members of their community. When we met in 2019, Casey had been supporting currently incarcerated people and their loved ones for many years and, at the conference, discussed their vision of a broader network of support across the Midwest. The following year, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, Casey started a weekly outdoor distribution project of masks, hand sanitizer, food, funds, and poetry zines in their North Chicago neighborhood. Any community member could come to the table Casey had set up by the metro station and have a free cup of coffee, a pastry, and conversation. When I later visited Casey in Chicago, I saw the positive effects of Casey's community care – at least five different people all recognized Casey by name and greeted them, even though the distribution table wasn't set up that day. Casey's dedication to the project was borne out of the historical knowledge of structural abandonment of working class and poor people in Chicago, but the fruit of that dedication was the strong bonds that they had built with their neighbors. I learned that through this project, Casey had driven people to their doctor's appointments and raised funds for formerly and currently incarcerated LGBTQ people, all while continuing to write their dissertation and support their friends behind bars. Casey's kindness, generosity of spirit, and genuine care for their neighbors made that project a success.

Casey and I remained friends after they left the Midwest for the Bay Area, and throughout our conversations we have studied and talked about histories of oppression and struggles for justice in the US and across the world. It is truly a privilege to count Casey as a friend, to know them as an intellectual, and to have collaborated with them as a colleague in the past. I firmly believe that despite this case, Casey remains a person of good character: principled, caring, and dedicated to justice for marginalized people everywhere.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Jasmine Ehrhardt  
[jlehrhar@umich.edu](mailto:jlehrhar@umich.edu)

Arab and Muslim American Studies | Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies  
Latina/o Studies | Native American Studies



February 23, 2025

The Honorable Jeffrey S White  
California Northern District Court  
Oakland, CA

Dear Judge White,

I am writing to provide a character reference for Casey Goonan. I am a tenured professor of East Asian Studies and Integrated Studies in Education on permanent disability leave from my position at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Prior to McGill, I taught in the United States most recently at the University of Iowa and Stanford University. In addition to my academic career, I was a volunteer Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and guardian ad litem for abused children in California for ten years. I have resided in Canada since 2008.

I first became acquainted with Casey Goonan five or six years ago via fundraising and support efforts for elderly and disabled prisoners in the United States. Casey's compassionate and generous advocacy was most evident in campaigns supporting people who were not famous or causes célèbres, but poor and socially isolated individuals without networks of social support. Unlike many younger activists who are drawn to support high profile prisoners often for social clout, Casey devoted countless hours to helping people whose stories likely otherwise would have received no attention at all.

I observed Casey's respect for others and unsolicited acts of kindness on numerous occasions. I recall in particular Casey's kind words for an elderly friend of mine, a retired teacher who does not use social media. My friend felt moved to voice concerns about the well-being of several Black prisoners in Pennsylvania and sent photos and letters to be shared with those organizing the support campaigns. Casey took the time to send her encouraging words of gratitude for her efforts, which meant a lot to her.

I have found Casey to be kind, considerate, and altruistic. Although we have never met in person, we have maintained regular correspondence, including since Casey's arrest eight months ago. In our recent correspondence, Casey continues to exhibit deeply sensitive and caring traits. Casey will surely continue to contribute positively to the lives of many people in need of social support in the future despite the lapse in judgment related to this case.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Hurley, Ph.D.  
8036A Chemin Avon  
Montréal Ouest, Québec  
H4X1L8 Canada

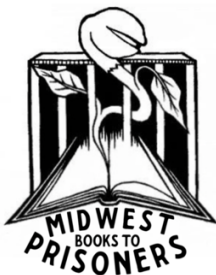
To the Honorable Jeffrey S. White, California Northern District Court - Oakland, CA,

My name is Dr. Luis Trujillo, and I am a Lecturer in the Department of Ethnic Studies at California State University San Bernardino. I first met Casey as a first-year graduate student at the University of California Riverside. I had just started my doctorate program and was attending my first ever graduate seminar when Casey introduced himself to me. He was an undergraduate student at the time, but he was also enrolled in the seminar. Over the course of many months and years I got to know Casey even more. My first impression of him was very high. He was a shy young man, but deeply motivated, very smart, and highly disciplined. He reminded me of myself. He's not the most outspoken person; his demeanor was very timid but had a deeply held set of ethics and morals that guided his work as a student and an organizer.

To that end, I see Casey as a extraordinarily selfless person. He dedicated his life to helping people. He was charitable with his time and went above and beyond to the support the people most marginalized in this society. I see his principles and values as one rooted in love and justice. For example, as an undergraduate he dedicated his time to running a newsletter for people in the prison system. He was a lifeline, a reconnection to society and humanity for people serving sentences. I will admit that I did not maintain consistent connection with Casey after our time together in Riverside. I saw him once at a conference in 2018. He was still the same Casey, kind, gentle, and determined. I still believe that Casey is a great person, everything I learned about him as a young man makes me believe that is true.

Sincerely,

Luis Trujillo, PhD



## **Midwest Books to Prisoners**

1321 N Milwaukee Ave  
PMB #460  
Chicago, IL 60622  
midwestbookstoprisoners.org  
midwestb2p@gmail.com

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Senior District Judge Jeffrey S. White  
United States District Court  
Northern District of California  
1301 Clay Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Judge White:

We are Midwest Books to Prisoners, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based out of Chicago, Illinois. For over 20 years, our all-volunteer community organization has provided free literature, including educational and rehabilitative materials, to people incarcerated all across the country.

We are writing this letter in support of community member and dear friend Casey Goonan, who has pled guilty to a criminal charge before your Court. We would like to share some of our experiences with this brilliant, caring, loving person so that you can hopefully get to know them like we do. Even though they are not from Chicago, they lived here for a time and their absence leaves a huge vacuum in our communities and in the hearts of those that knew them personally.

Casey has a deep passion for justice, but not just in a superficial or academic way: they humbly walked the talk and put in the hard unseen work often at great personal sacrifice. Casey was active in under-served neighborhoods organizing mutual aid projects to distribute food and other essential supplies to those in need during harsh Chicago winters. For an otherwise privileged young person who could have been doing anything else, it speaks to their character that Casey could not ignore the immense injustices in our society and would work tirelessly uplifting those experiencing houselessness, criminalization, or who have otherwise been cast to the bottom margins of society.

Casey was particularly driven to support those incarcerated throughout the nation's jails and prisons. For example, they would host letter writing events, organize fundraisers for people inside so that their family members could stay in contact, and even physically visit people they had never met (which unfortunately many people simply never bother to do, as visiting people inside can be logistically and emotionally difficult, not to mention expensive). In particular, Casey is known for their inside/outside prison publishing work, which is how we came to know Casey. In our experience having published and distributed reading materials to people inside for over 20 years, the situation in carceral facilities is very grim: the already limited educational programs that existed never fully recovered from the COVID lockdowns, and many institutions do not have or prioritize

libraries or higher education; furthermore, people inside do not have the ability to do basic research or write and publish their written works like the rest of us, stunting the development of so many brilliant minds behind bars.

The work Casey has done to address this tragic deficiency has truly been a bright light in a sea of darkness; they created a publishing and distribution project that has assisted hundreds of incarcerated authors and artists in perfecting and sharing their expressive works with the outside world. For many years, people could request free literature, or they could submit their own pieces to be shared with others. For those who might be incarcerated at institutions like our local Cook County Jail that does not even have a library, Casey has provided priceless knowledge and a glimpse of the free world by providing free literature upon request. The effect providing this essential human connection and the opportunity for growth can have is immeasurable, but we hear about it all the time from people inside: Casey has made positive impacts on countless lives. For organizations like ours, their work has been an inspiration, helping us fine tune our operations, but we will especially always remember their relentless drive and genuine love for the people that inspires us now more than ever during these hard times.

We humbly ask that you take into consideration our positive experiences with Casey, and show leniency in whatever consequences you decide. We know that Casey understands the seriousness of their conviction and has taken responsibility by pleading guilty. It has been over a year since their arrest: we are asking that you please grant leniency to Casey so that they can return to family and community as soon as possible. We are confident that they will overcome and grow through this situation as a better person than before.

Please reach out to us at the contact information above if you have any questions or would like any further information. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Midwest Books to Prisoners





spaded@seattleu.edu

February 24, 2025

Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
California Northern District Court  
Oakland, CA

Dear Judge White:

I am writing with regard to Casey Goonan. I have known Casey for over a year. I met Casey through Prof. Dylan Rodriguez, a colleague with whom I have collaborated on various academic and community projects for the last decade or more.

During the last year, I have corresponded with Casey. We have shared academic interests and reading suggestions. I have seen that Casey, as Prof. Rodriguez initially informed me, is an engaged, thoughtful person, very interested in the well-being of people in the community. I intend to continue to support Casey, and I hope to be of use to Casey when Casey is released. I believe that Casey is a person of good character who will be a part of important community work upon release. If I can answer any questions about my experiences with Casey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Spade".

Dean Spade  
Professor  
Seattle University School of Law



Honorable Jeffrey White;

Our son Casey was a great kid and a high school standout in sports and music. He received his bachelor's degree from UC Riverside in Ethnic Studies. He was drawn into prisoner outreach and reform. He then went on to a full scholarship for his master's and PhD degrees in African American studies at Northwestern University in Illinois. Our son Casey has been involved in left leaning causes since entering college. He became very concerned about the well-being of marginalized people.

He worked very hard but in 2016 he did not feel well most of the year. His master's exam and workload for doctoral studies was stressful on top of not feeling well. He then took one quarter off from school to work on his physical as well as mental health. He contracted pneumonia which attacked the pancreas and was told that he now had insulin dependent type one diabetes. The stress of this and being so far away from home led to counseling/therapy.

After an outpatient program he returned to school and successfully passed his Master's exam and began work on his dissertation as well as his university responsibilities such as teaching and research.

Then the pandemic came, schools were closed as well as libraries, but Casey continued as best he could.

In the Spring of 2021, following a tumultuous year Casey did two outpatient programs for OCD and anxiety, which was also considered PTSD. Each time learning coping skills

Casey returned to California to finish his dissertation which led to his earning his PhD.

In the past couple of years Casey has become extremely concerned about the genocide of innocent Palestinian people in Gaza as well as the treatment of protestors at UCLA and UC Santa Cruz

The series of unfortunate events happened within a few weeks. Casey went to the encampments of Pro- Palestinian protestors at UC Berkeley, we did not hear from him for a week. Then he called and said his friend was taking him to the Martinez County hospital as he had some sores on his legs and feet. He asked me (mom) to meet him there. His brother was with me, and he seemed to be talking nonstop. He told the doctor that he went to two hospitals and no doctor would see him. Then the doctor pulled up his chart and told him that indeed he had seen a doctor, I believe at Sutter Health in Oakland and that the doctor had prescribed an antibiotic for his skin and refilled his insulin prescription. At that point the doctor took me out into the hallway and told me that he thought Casey should have a psychiatric evaluation.

He sent Casey to Adventist Health in St. Helena on a "5150" He was there for the required amount of time and was given a bipolar medication from Dr. Clark. He checked out and came home with us.

He was fine during the following week and had a trip planned to Chicago to see some old friends and professors from school.

On the way to the airport he seemed agitated, but I dropped him off at the airport. He was going to stay a couple of weeks but called and wanted to come home before the week was over. Because of his trip we had some guests staying in the room that Casey stays while at home. He was clearly agitated and said he would stay with friends in Oakland.

Looking back, early the next morning was the event of the police car fire. We are so very sad about his situation and apparent mental breakdown.

Casey is a wonderful, caring person and with counseling and therapy he can be a very useful member of society.

We do not condone violence in any way, shape or form and we know that these acts were not right but we sincerely believe that he has so much more to give to society on the outside versus behind bars.

Sincerely,

Michael and Julie Goonan

The Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
Oakland Courthouse, Courtroom 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Judge White,

My name is Edward Wolf and I am Casey Goonan's biological uncle. I am his father's biological older brother, even though we have different last names.

I am retired now and living in Portland OR, but for 44 years lived and worked in San Francisco, primarily in the mental health field, focusing on people with HIV/AIDS or at risk of contracting it.

I have known Casey all his life and have spent a lot of time with him over the years, as ours is a huge family and one that gets together often. I have always known him to be a good boy, a good son, an excellent student, athlete and older cousin and nephew to his numerous family members.

When he graduated high school in 2008 to attend UC Riverside, I was very interested to see what his field of study was going to be. When he would come home for the holidays/ summers, his interest in political science was powerful to experience. When he was awarded the African American PhD chair at Northwestern in 2015, the entire family was so proud of him.

I didn't see much of him while at Northwestern, but when he finished his doctorate and came back to California, he travelled up to Portland in August of 2022 to see me. He was a grown man now, and extremely eloquent, though I was struck by the very energetic ways in which he spoke and the nervous twitch he had developed while he was away. I shared my observations of his manic behavior with him and he confided, in a text, that "I've felt really emotionally confused at times throughout the process of being back out here." When I spoke with his parents, they told me about the sudden onset of Type 1 diabetes that had occurred while away at Northwestern and thought that might have had something to do with his anxiety and manic mood swings. When I saw him again in January of 2023, the speed with which he spoke and presented himself was alarming. I told him it was difficult to follow his train of thought and that he was talking over all of us. He was aware, at times, that his behavior was erratic, but didn't seem to be able to do anything to slow himself down.

I was extremely relieved to hear that recently a psychiatrist who is part of the mental health unit at Santa Rita Jail was able to prescribe Prosac for Casey's mood swings and have heard from his parents that he's reported being helped greatly by that treatment regimen.

I do know Casey to be a good and caring person and hope that someday he will be able to put behind him his recent challenging behaviors and become the excellent teacher that I know he is destined to be.

Respectfully,

Ed Wolf

To the Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
Oakland Courthouse, Courtroom 5-2nd Floor  
1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94512

We are Barbara and Dexter Meyer of Auburn, California. Casey Goonan is our nephew. Casey has always been a kind, soft spoken, considerate and polite kid/young man. We have always been so proud of him from when he played sports, to playing drums and to getting his PHD. Just an all-around good person. There was a time we needed help digging a french drain in our backyard and he offered without hesitation to help. He showed up with a shovel in hand. Another time, when moving, he again showed up to help. Whenever you spend time with Casey, you always walked away saying, "Why can't all young men be like him".

A few years ago, after a family gathering, we had a conversation on our way home. We had both noticed that Casey seemed off and not himself. He seemed very withdrawn and depressed. He didn't even seem to want to make eye contact. Almost like he didn't even want us there. It really stood out to us because that wasn't his normal behavior. This was not the Casey we knew. We saw him a couple times after that too and the same thing. Something wasn't right with him.

All we know is that we hope wherever he is sent that it has good Healthcare for his diabetes and good Mental Health care for his mental health condition. There is no doubt in our minds that Casey has some kind of mental disorder. Anyone who knew him, would agree. This past Thanksgiving, we had a chance to speak to Casey while he was incarcerated. It seemed like the old Casey we knew was back. He was sweet, caring, loving and engaged like we remember him being in the past. We do believe, if Casey continues to get the help that he needs, he will be the Casey that we have always known him to be, sweet, kind and polite, just like you would want any family member or person of the community to be.

Sincerely Barbara and Dexter Meyer

The Honorable Jeffrey S White  
Oakland Court House, Court Rm 5  
Clay Street, Oakland, Ca 94612

Your honor,

I am writing to you today to provide a character reference for  
Casey Goonan, whom I have known for his entire life.

My name is June Elizabeth Wilson and I am one of Casey's aunts. Throughout Caseys young life, he has been nothing less than a blessing to our family. He has always been kind, thoughtful and even sweet. As he went through high school and off to college he remained the same. I have watched Casey make our family so very proud. Through high school, he played baseball, football, and entertained the family playing piano and drums. He pitched at the Oakland stadium, went to college where he was maintaining the highest of grades and then earning a scholarship to Northwestern. Casey is the first generation to earn a phd., in our family of construction workers, electricians, artist and other blue collar workers. He has been a steady upstanding example for his brother and cousins until this break from character.

I'm am not sure what drew Casey to make a choice so out of character. Perhaps, being under so much stress with his own health issues, his fathers stroke and his closest aunt passing with cancer, all in the last 6 months to a year, prior to taking this action. I do know until this time, he has been committed to doing good things with his life ,including being a wonderful son, brother, cousin, and nephew. He spent his own time feeding the homeless with his own money and even making hot soups for them during the winter. He's an avid reader and writer, loves the out doors, hiking, and biking.

I write in hopes, that you will take into consideration the many good things Casey has done and will strive to do again . I ask with all do respect, you think about placing him in a facility somewhere he can get the mental health support he needs, continued education and close to family so we can visit. Casey has a good heart and strives to be a good human, with a good family who never saw this coming, but will be here for him when he returns. Thank you your honor.

Cordially, June Wilson

To the Honorable Judge White,

My name is Linda Wolf. I am one of Casey Goonan's aunts. I live in Saint Petersburg, Florida. I have worked for USAA Insurance Company for 32 years. I am currently an Advocacy & Regulatory Relations Director.

I am writing to tell you I have known my nephew, Casey, since he was born. In my experience, Casey has always been a kind, thoughtful, intelligent and disciplined young man. For example, at one family reunion most of the kids in our large clan were playing and showed little interest in helping to create a celebration for their grandmother. Casey, on the other hand, spent hours helping his younger brother and niece create a scrapbook for their grandmother. All through high school when he was a star student, athlete and musician, he remained humble and talked about teamwork, and gratitude for his good life. Although we live on separate coasts I've maintained a special contact with Casey because he is close in age to my daughter, Amber. Casey and Amber are the first two members of our family to earn doctorates and I am proud of both.

I was absolutely shocked to hear about the acts Casey has plead guilty to committing. I was also relieved he took ownership. I know in recent years he developed diabetes and that had a significant impact on his personality. I believe that may have influenced his behavior because he became very depressed.

I believe that with proper medical treatment and because of the humbling experience of being incarcerated, Casey will emerge to be the good person he has always been. Maybe even better.

Thank you kindly,

Linda Wolf

John OLeary  
1607 Merian Dr  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
Oscarfentonblue@yahoo.com  
925-381-8077  
March 25, 2025

Honorable Jeffrey White  
US District Court  
Northern District California  
1301 Clay St.  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Honorable Jeffrey White,

My name is John O'Leary. I have known Casey Goonan since I moved on the same court as his family in 2007. Having known Casey since he was in high school I feel I can provide you with some insight into the person I have come to know.

The first day my family lived in our new home there was a knock at the front door. It was a young man no older than 16 or 17 years old. He introduced himself, welcomed us to the neighborhood, and wanted to know if he could help our transition in any way. My wife and I were instantly impressed with his warmth and sincerity.

As the years passed we watched Casey blossom into a confident, successful young man. He was a stand out athlete in high school but you would never know it due to his humble nature. He was a dedicated and bright student who went on to earn the highest degree from a prestigious university. In short he was an All-American kid. Someone you want your own children to emulate.

I believe Casey would be the first person to admit he has made poor decisions. Life altering decisions. These decisions are not consistent with the person I know and have known for almost two decades. It is my understanding that Casey has in recent years had a mental health setback, although this does not excuse his actions, it may shed some light on why he would act so out of character.

Casey knows the seriousness of his actions and has shown remorse. He is taking the necessary steps to move on from this dark phase of his life.

I am writing to you because you hold Casey's future in your hands. A severe sentence in this case serves nobody. With Casey's solid network of support and his resilient character his future can still be a bright and successful one. A more compassionate sentence will give him the opportunity to use his many talents to better serve his community and society as a whole.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John O'Leary

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this in the hopes that the reflections of a family friend of Casey Goonan might provide the reader with a slightly fuller understanding of Casey's life. I met Casey in 1997 when he was an elementary school classmate of my son, and I've maintained close friendships with the Goonan family to this day.

I saw young Casey grow and mature from a close vantage point. His dad and I coached all of our kids in local youth sports leagues (often together), and I was a frequent volunteer supporting the kids' middle school concert and jazz band performances. I knew young Casey as a talented, outgoing and fun-loving multi-sport athlete and musician. Another of my sons described Casey's presence and popularity in high school with wonder. (My guess is that Casey probably squeezed in time for high school academics when his many other activities allowed).

While Casey was in junior college, he became very thoughtful and reflective about important struggles for social justice facing our country. Some of his developing interests included fact-based scholarly and investigative work that was largely ignored, dismissed or censored by mainstream media.

As Casey progressed through his undergraduate and then post-graduate studies, it was clear that he was on a path to committed political engagement to growing and deeply held values: Those consistent with democratic principles, constitutional protections, inclusion and fairness.

I was amazed hearing about and reading some of Casey's post-graduate work in support of various social reform movements, including his substantial commitment of time and effort outside of academic settings. Here was a young man brought up in a protective suburban environment who easily could have focused his college efforts on a career path that would almost guarantee his future personal material comfort.

Yet, Casey discovered a fundamental intention within him to serve others, particularly classes of people disempowered, ignored or whose basic humanity has perhaps been effectively denied by entrenched systems of power. This kind of selflessness has to be very rare.

My hope for Casey is that he reflects on the need for intensely passionate commitment to deeply held beliefs to be governed closely for appropriate ways to effect change. If the ends are truly noble and just, then there are well-considered ways to raise awareness among people of conscience and garner political support.

I believe Casey has in him sustained commitment to social justice, and that he can create and nurture positive ways to help effect change where warranted. I hope he gets as much opportunity as possible to develop and implement such skills. We certainly need effective voices, as Casey aspires to have, promoting social justice and fairness, particularly among marginalized classes and people.

Jeff Ryan



To the Honorable Jeffrey S. White,

My name is Kim Brennan and I am a friend of Casey Goonan's. I have known Casey for about 4 years. I met Casey through his work with incarcerated people. I was not shocked to find out Casey was a PHD, he spoke with passion and with deep understanding of political history and the circumstances of marginalized populations in the United States. I remember one time Casey drove 7 hours to attend a fundraiser, and we talked at length about the meaning of solidarity and the intertwining struggles of women, queer people, African Americans, and indigenous people in this country. Casey has a brilliant mind, and a deep well of empathy for humanity. Casey and I shared in common that we both write letters to incarcerated people. I had a few long term pen pals in prison who did not have much family and support, and when I told Casey about them he sat down and wrote them letters that night. I remember how neat his handwriting was and how easily he sat down and wrote letters to strangers. Many people struggle to even write birthday cards, but Casey never had trouble finding the words. I'm sure you know what a difference it makes in someone's prison time and later re-integration to receive support from the outside. It can be a lifeline, and Casey was a lifeline to many people while they were doing their time.

On a visit one time Casey was injured at a concert and could not drive home. He stayed with me for a few extra days until he could make travel plans to get back. Casey was always very careful to tend to the needs of others and even though he was injured and supposed to be resting he insisted on washing dishes, cleaning up, and ordering pizzas for myself and my roommates to apologize for the extended stay, even though it was no bother at all. We spent that few days watching the show Reservation Dogs, a comedy about teenagers growing up on a reservation in Oklahoma, and talking late into the night. As I write this I am very saddened to realize it may be a long time before I have another long late night chat with my friend.

Sometime a few years ago Casey began to seem more stressed than usual. He mentioned quitting what sounded like a good job. I asked him why and he couldn't really articulate his reasoning, which was unlike him. He seemed to be having mood swings and mental health difficulties. There is a lot going on in the world to be upset about, and Casey was taking it extra hard. I know Casey to be a generous, kind, and supportive person. The world is better having him in it, and I have no doubt that Casey is of the highest moral character. I hope his good character and long history of service to others will be factored into the decision you have to make regarding his case.

Thank you for your time,

Kim Brennan

To the Honorable Jeffrey S. White, California Northern District Court - Oakland, CA,

I am honored to write this letter in support of Casey, a truly selfless and compassionate individual whose generosity has touched countless lives, including my own.

I first met Casey during one of the most difficult times in my life. I was newly divorced, with not a lot of resources or support when I moved to Cincinnati, OH. Not only was this during a time in my life I was pursuing a new path via my talent, it was during a time I questioned if I was a person deserving of time, support, and love. I first met Casey at a community event lead by them in Chicago, IL. Casey was there for me without hesitation—offering not just words of encouragement, but real, tangible help. Their kindness and unwavering friendship gave me the strength to push forward. Because of their support, I was able to build myself up, pursue my passion, and allow my self grace while doing so. Today, I am in a position to provide for my loved ones and extend the same care and generosity that Casey has always shown to those around them.

Casey's selflessness extends far beyond me. They have consistently given to their community, ensuring that those who struggle to access essential resources never go without. Whether it's food, clothing, or assistance navigating difficult circumstances, Casey steps up, never expecting anything in return. Their heart is with their community, and they are a pillar of support for so many who would otherwise be "overlooked".

It is rare to meet someone as genuinely compassionate as Casey. They embody the very best of what it means to be a community member, a friend, and a support system. I am forever grateful to them, and I wholeheartedly stand by their character.

Sincerely,

Benney  
Stacey Bennett



**Prison+Neighborhood  
Arts/Education Project**

800 W. Buena Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60613  
[www.p-nap.org](http://www.p-nap.org)

To The Honorable Jeffrey S. White, California Northern District Court - Oakland. CA,

I'm writing in support of Casey Goonan. I am currently the Community Organizer and Intern Coordinator at the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project. I first met Casey in 2019 while an undergraduate at Northwestern University. At the time they were a grad student who was also in the Black studies department. I know Casey to be extremely generous and one of the most brilliant people I've met.

We formed a friendship and mentorship over our commitment to working with people incarcerated in the US prison system. Casey taught me a great deal about how to work with incarcerated people and connected me with people who have been in my life since. With Casey's support I was able to learn about the lived experiences of incarcerated people and what role I could play in supporting them.

Casey's influence led me to the current field I work in of prison education work. I've worked at the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project since 2021 continuing my passion of working with systems impacted community members. Without Casey's guidance and support I would not have realized this vision. I'm always grateful to them for this. The lessons I learned from Casey are things I practice daily in my job to this very day.

Since Casey moved back home we've checked in on each other's wellbeing on and off. I know their mental health played a part in their moving back home because in 2022 we lived across the street from one another yet saw each other less and less. I know the stress of the world had a great impact on their own well being.

At their core Casey is one of the most loving and generous people I've met and this will remain true despite the case. They are deeply committed to helping people whether it's providing direct aid or advocating for them.

Sincerely,  
Eliza Gonring

**Northwestern**

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Department of **Black Studies**

Northwestern University  
Department of Black Studies  
Crowe Hall  
1860 Campus Drive, 5-128  
Evanston, Illinois 60208

blackstudies@northwestern.edu  
Office 847. 491. 5122  
blackstudies.northwestern.edu

February 26, 2025

Dear Honorable Jeffrey S. White,

My name is Brian Zuluaga and I am a PhD student at Northwestern University's Department of Black Studies. I currently live in Chicago and work as a teacher and researcher at Northwestern. I'm writing this letter in support of Casey Goonan.

I have known Casey for about one year now. We met through our shared experience at Northwestern University's Department of Black Studies. Although we did not cross paths, we got in touch through letter correspondence.

My knowledge of Casey's character is one of deep care and kindness. As I'm in my second year of the doctoral program, Casey has offered mentorship advice regarding academia and scholarship. Their mentorship has played an important role in my studies and I deeply appreciate how they have shown up for me. Graduate school is a difficult rite of passage and Casey has offered tips and advice that has made my experience easier.

As I have gotten to know Casey better, I am confident in stating that their personhood and scholarship has always been dedicated to improving the lives of others in their community and of those around the world. Casey has a clear moral compass and one that inspires those around them to support your local community and spread love wherever you can. This propensity for love and care is a rare trait and I'm grateful to have found these qualities in someone I consider a mentor.

Sincerely,

Brian Zuluaga

PhD Student, Department of Black Studies

Northwestern University

Emma Gonzalez  
2019 N Avers  
Chicago, IL 60647  
312-560-6419  
Submitted via email at [emmageegonzalez@gmail.com](mailto:emmageegonzalez@gmail.com)

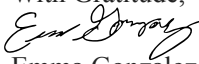
To The Honorable Jeffrey S. White, California Northern District Court - Oakland, CA

My name is Emma Gonzalez and I am an Outreach Coordinator with the Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice. Through my work, I've been able to advocate on behalf of fellow Illinois residents for fair treatment within the pretrial system. This sense of justice in my work is also what connected me with Casey Goonan in early 2021.

Casey and I met during our shared love of volunteering. In particular, we met through Liberation Library - an organization that provides books to young people incarcerated in Illinois prisons and jails. During 2021, Casey joined our magazine committee to help curate the first ever magazine which offers life skills such as building a credit score, current news, and building healthy relationships. Through this work, it became abundantly clear how much Casey had to give the magazine. Not only did he write about the history of political movements, he also wrote questions that encouraged our readers to think critically about the world around us. Using texts such as *Holes* by Louis Sachar, Casey expanded the ways our readers can interact with the books of their choosing.

Through this work, Casey and I would go on to develop a romantic relationship. While we only dated from October 2021 to April 2022, our relationship is something I will always cherish. We spent hours talking about our shared interests, listening to shoegaze, and eating really good food together. This all came to a special moment when Casey met my mother in February 2022. We took him to our favorite Mexican restaurant and Casey was so nervous that he turned red. A classic sign of wanting to make a good impression. However, over the course of the meal, I saw them both warm up to each other. Casey piqued my mother's interest with their work at Northwestern, stories of their family, and their shared curiosity for life's biggest questions. Casey has a gentle spirit that made both my mom and I feel secure and safe. I genuinely believe that everyone close to Casey can feel that energy too. To this day, Casey is one of my favorite exes and my friends wholeheartedly agree. Our relationship did not work out due to distance with Casey finishing his doctoral program. Otherwise, it was a huge step towards me being able to have healthy relationships. Casey modeled that for me.

Thank you so much for considering this letter and reading more about Casey. Please feel free to contact me to verify any specific details.

With Gratitude,  
  
Emma Gonzalez

Kirin Agustin Rajagopalan  
Co-Founder/English & Ethnic Studies Teacher  
The Homies Empowerment FREEdom School  
9006 MacArthur Blvd.  
Oakland, CA 94605

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
California District Court  
Oakland, CA

Honorable Judge White,

My name is Kirin Agustin Rajagopalan and I am a professor at Sacramento State University and a teacher at the Homies Empowerment FREEdom school in Oakland, CA. I am writing on behalf of my close friend Casey Goonan to attest to their good character.

I have known Casey for almost five years, and during this time have learned so much from their positive attitude and genuine dedication to social justice and community transformation. Multiple times I have observed Casey selflessly giving away their money and resources to those in need even as Casey was struggling. I have seen Casey tirelessly working to support communities and movements both inside and outside prison walls, donating their time and resources to contributing to positive change. I've sat with Casey for long hours writing incarcerated community members, providing them with much needed resources and care, as well as out on the streets striking up conversations with people the rest of society writes off.

Casey has had a positive impact on everyone's lives they have touched, and has strong networks and relationships across the country. In my experience, if you ask Casey for help or support, they would drop everything to be there for you. This is a rare attribute, and I really look up to Casey for this. They have been my dog Jagua's caretaker and best friend for his entire life. Every time Casey would come over, my dog would go nuts with excitement, and whenever they would leave would throw a tantrum to try to get them to stay. If this doesn't speak to the love and positivity Casey emanates, I don't know what does.

Casey's creativity and intelligence are boundless. I have learned so much from my long conversations with them, and the deep respect and relationship they have for communities that are different from the one they grew up with. A talented percussionist, I have brought Casey along during several occasions to *fandangos* in the Bay Area *son jarocho* community, where they have just jumped right in to gleefully participate in these open community jam sessions, forging strong relationships in the process. This attests to their community-minded, positive character.

That is who Casey is: a selfless, intelligent, loving person. Everybody that I know who also knows Casey would express the same sentiment; Casey is someone who should be here with us on the outside, working for a better future. I miss them every day and eagerly await the day we can bring them home!

Sincerely,  
Kirin Agustin Rajagopalan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kirin Agustin Rajagopalan', with a stylized, flowing script.



Date: March 15, 2025

To: The Honorable Jeffrey S. White, California Northern District Court, Oakland, CA

From: Liberation Library

My name is Bettina Johnson and I am writing this letter in support of Casey Goonan. I serve as a Steering Committee member for Liberation Library, a program based in Chicago, IL that has been sending books to incarcerated readers for the past ten years and co-producing a magazine together for the past five years. Liberation Library collaborates with currently and formerly incarcerated young people to create the magazine which we see as a space where they can share their artwork, & stories as well as connect with others in similar situations.

Casey was an early and eager contributor and supportive of our youth magazine project. In 2021, they joined our magazine committee to help curate our first ever magazine which offered life skills such as building a credit score, current news, and building healthy relationships. Through this work, it became abundantly clear how much Casey had to give to this special project. Not only did he write about the history of political movements, he also wrote questions that encouraged our readers to think critically about the world around us. Using texts such as Holes by Louis Sachar, Casey expanded the ways our readers can interact with the books of their choosing.

Casey's work with Liberation Library has been incredibly impactful. They were extremely generous with their time and resources; frequently donating physical materials including zines and books to Liberation Library along with offering their personal time in the form of packing books and working on the magazine. Early on, Casey shared their wisdom about previous historical actions and movements to support incarcerated people's leadership and creativity and that knowledge shaped how Liberation Library conceived of our magazine project.

We believe that Casey is a person of good character and someone eager to support communities around them in ways that matter.

Sincerely,

Bettina Johnson

Liberation Library



Michelle Smith  
3315 Chestnut St  
Oakland, CA 94608  
michellecsmith@protonmail.com

20 February 2025

The Honorable Jeffrey S. White  
Oakland Courthouse, Courtroom 5 - 2nd Floor  
1301 Clay St  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Casey Robert Goonan

Dear Judge White,

My name is Michelle Smith. I live in Oakland and I work at a public library. I met Casey Robert Goonan in 2022 through mutual friends. I have gotten to know Casey well over the last two or three years, and I consider them my friend.

I am writing this letter because I know Casey to be a good person who cares deeply about others. I understand and respect that Casey has pleaded guilty to a crime, and I am writing this letter in hopes of providing the court with a fuller picture of who Casey is as a person. I know Casey to be very open, friendly, and generous, and I have frequently witnessed them being welcoming and kind to others who were having a tough time or were new to a social situation. Due to these qualities, Casey has many friends from many geographic locations and walks of life, and is always eager to connect people to each other and help others to build similar communities around them. Additionally, Casey has long shown immense care and regard for people in prison, and their years of dedicated work to correspond with and support prisoners in need has been an inspiring example for me and many others I know.

Based on what I know to be true about Casey's kind nature and regard for others, I believe that Casey will continue to exhibit these qualities and be a person of good character despite this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Smith". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Michelle Smith

Ms. Norma DeBooth

[REDACTED]

Chicago, IL 60647

[REDACTED]

September 6, 2025

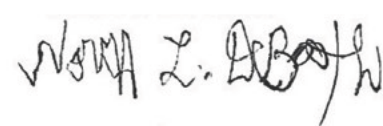
Senior District Judge Jeffrey S. White  
United States District Court  
Northern District of California  
1301 Clay Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Judge White:

Good afternoon. I am Norma DeBooth. I'm recovering from a spinal cord injury. I have known Casey for almost ten years. Casey has been my volunteer caregiver off and on during that time. Casey is a very helpful person not only to me but towards other people. Casey is a great teacher and writer and a great, helpful person within the community. Because I'm a quadriplegic Casey helped by giving me a bed bath, dressing me, helping me in and out of bed and my wheelchair, arranging my meals, and doing light housekeeping for me. I'm grateful for Casey and appreciate their help to resume as soon as possible. Many in the community are awaiting Casey to continue contributing volunteering in the community. No matter my personal needs, Casey is warm, kind, understanding, and willing to help me live more comfortably daily.

Yours Truly,

Norma DeBooth

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norma L. DeBooth". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.